

DANCING YET TO THE DIM DIM'S BEAT  
CONTEMPORARY POETRY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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CHANGE

Blue mountains turned  
 into red battered hills.  
 While smoking waterfalls  
 dried on brown cliffs.  
 Faint smoke from gardens  
 trailing into clear air  
 all smothered now by  
 black industrial fog.  
 ...Brown houses of old replaced  
 by white houses without 'doors.'  
 Naked breasts once standing up proudly  
 now shrink and sweat in 'breastbags.'  
 O New Guinea!  
 You are changing fast in Niugini.

Bede Dus Mapun<sup>1</sup>

In September of 1972, three years before celebrating its full independence from Australia, Papua New Guinea (PNG) held its own National Writers Day. On that day, according to Elton Brash, Administrator L.W. Johnson addressed the audience and put forth a suggestion that "...in a developing country, the writer had a duty to create a national consciousness."<sup>2</sup> University of Papua New Guinea student, black power activist and poet John Kasaipswalova added that the writer had a responsibility to capture and express, contemporaneously, the people's consciousness. Both speakers indicated that

for a fledgling nation, national concerns outweighed the writer's personal interests. Comparing PNG's literary situation to that of African experiences, Brash, then a lecturer in English at the University of Papua New Guinea, recalled an essay, "The Writer in an African State," by Nigerian writer, Wole Soyinka, who stated: "The artist has always functioned in African society as the record of the mores and experience of his society and as the voice of vision in his own time."<sup>3</sup> According to Brash, Soyinka observed four stages in the evolution of an African writer. Papua New Guinea's literary situation could be compared to Soyinka's observations of a creative literature undergoing an evolution common to newly established nations. Brash, interpreting Soyinka, hypothesized that a four-stage evolution was necessary "before a former colony could say it was no longer dominated by colonialism or anti-colonial reactionism."<sup>4</sup>

The first stage covered a period prior to independence. The creative literature in this period expressed hope, a growing awareness, with increasing anger and resentment towards foreign domination. Anti-colonialist literature became dominant. A second phase was then reached with the arrival of independence. A sense of victory and pro-nationalism was a recurrent theme, with anti-colonialism still an important factor. Writers re-affirmed their "identification with the aspirations of nationalism and the stabilisation of society."<sup>5</sup> This period of literature then gave way to a period of disillusionment, which Soyinka identified as the stage in which a majority of African writers presently find themselves: "For the situation in Africa today is the same the world over, it is not one of the tragedies which come of isolated human failures, but the very collapse of humanity."<sup>6</sup> Politicians, not writers, were determining the philosophy and directions of modern

Africa. After political independence, writers had not responded to the country's needs. Soyinka stressed that African writers needed to develop further. Hence, a fourth stage, not yet achieved:

The point in my talk was that the African writer is being caught by events. He is beginning to be a mere chronicler....Even George Orwell, if you like, wrote with a great vision—whether you accept it or not this is a fact! Even Arthur Miller in his Crucible wrote of the beginnings of something terrible within his own society....This does not mean that every African writer has to write in these terms....part of his essential purpose in society is to write with a very definite vision....he must at least begin by exposing the future in a clear and truthful exposition of the present."<sup>7</sup> (Soyinka, pg. 58 discussion)

This paper will examine the contents of pre- and post-independence poetry written in English by many of Papua New Guinea's indigenous writers. These authors, by virtue of publication and continuity, can be considered to be among the major indigenous poets of Papua New Guinea writing in English. This poetry will also be examined against the Brash/Soyinka "theory" concerning the development of literature in newly independent nations. It should be noted that Soyinka's experiences focus on Africa, and do not necessarily apply to Papua New Guinea; furthermore, Brash's interpretations of Soyinka do not necessarily reflect an accurate interpretation of Soyinka's article. The application of this theory to the literature of PNG has been made in order to provide a structure upon which the emergence of a creative written literature in a newly founded nation comprised of 700 different languages can be examined in the context of post-colonialism. The analysis will reveal how political and social situations in PNG from the late 1960s to the present affected the themes and development of this creative literature, and vice versa. Also, perhaps some aspects of contemporary life in PNG can be revealed by examining some of her poets and their works, many of whom were directly or indirectly

associated with the politics and the actors who helped formulate national policies at the time of independence.<sup>8</sup>

Papua New Guinea's creative written literature is not confined to poetry. A significant body of indigenous writing exists in the form of plays, radio drama, short stories, novels, contemporary oral histories and songs, film scripts, and essays. These works have been composed in a variety of languages, including tribal languages, English, Motu, and Tok Pisin. Some authors have also utilized a combination of languages in their written work.<sup>9</sup>

The discussion of Papua New Guinea's creative literature is by no means unique. Analysis of this writing has appeared in book reviews, interviews, literary criticism, editorials, articles, and essays. The depth of this analysis has ranged from the very informal to the academic. Non-indigenous scholars and journalists as well as Papua New Guinean writers have contributed to its study. Extensive bibliographies have also been compiled. Literary journals, newspapers and magazines published in Australia, Fiji, France, Germany, Hawaii, New Zealand, the Philippines, Senegal, the U.S. mainland, and Papua New Guinea itself, have documented the evolution of PNG's creative writing. It should also be noted that Papua New Guinea's emerging indigenous literature is a development that is not unique to the Pacific; rather, it is part of an emerging body of work that embodies a regional creative literature and consciousness. In the past thirty years the Pacific Islands have experienced a series of indigenous and local literary movements radiating out of New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tahiti, and Hawaii. Ever since the first South Pacific Creative Arts Festival in 1972 there has been a growing awareness of the magnitude of this regional writing.<sup>10</sup>

The Niugini as the poet Mapun saw things fifteen years ago is still changing, but this change can now be viewed from the perspective of independence. Since 1975, PNG has been independent in terms of its status as a nation, answerable to its own government, made up mostly of its own people.

### Decolonization

The first indigenous Papua New Guinean poet writing in English to appear in print, according to most sources, is A. P. Allan Natachee. Natachee, born Avaisa Pirongo, was given his present Apache name by one of his teacher/nun's. He was named after an American Indian hero in a fictional story about cowboys and Indians.<sup>11</sup> In 1940 at the age of 16, Natachee composed this poem:

#### Law and Lore of Nature

According to laws and lore of nature,  
 Man is bound to go on and on,  
 Solving adventure after adventure,  
 With an endlessness leading him on!  
 And for that cause which is yet unseen,  
 And that which is yet unknown:  
 On the morrow it shall be seen!  
 On the morrow it shall be known!...<sup>12</sup>

Natachee was "discovered" by Percy Cochrane, an administrator with the Department of Information and Extension Services who found him writing poetry in his Mekeo village of Amoamo. Both Cochrane and Natachee worked together in the broadcast section in Konedobu.<sup>13</sup> Cochrane helped Natachee guide his work into the Australian anthropological magazine, Oceania. In 1951 Natachee's work "Mekeo Poems and Legends" was published. Professor A.P. Elkin, Oceania

editor also published ten of Natachee's own poems as well. These were rendered in not quite perfect syntax but exacting rhyme:

What Ancestral Wealth and Knowledge?

O stone-age child, why do you like dreaming,  
Of dreams and thoughts of your ancestor?  
Why? Oh why do you continue clinging,  
To way and life of your ancestor?

What sort of wealth did he possess for you,  
And his knowledge of ability?  
None but worthlessness heathen rubbish for sure,  
Is now the cause of stupidity....

Advance Atomic Age

Courageously advance atomic age step by step,  
And crush under your foot our stone age,  
It cannot and will never resist your mighty step,  
Cautiously advance atomic age!

Hark and behold, our stone age is swaying and groaning,  
Right beneath your might step of pain,  
Hatingly and stubbornly resisting and frowning,  
But forever, and ever in vain....<sup>14</sup>

In 1969 Natachee received some rather harsh criticism of these early poems by none other than Ulli Beier himself, then editor of Kovave, Papua New Guinea's first literary magazine. Natachee was considered by Beier to be a "pilot poet," a term coined by J.P. Clark describing the first generation of West African poets many of whom were published in the West African Pilot, Nigeria's first nationalist newspaper. These poets wrote with good intentions but produced very little work of individual quality.<sup>15</sup>

Commenting upon early African writer, Beier wrote in Kovave, "Today we look at them as interesting figures in the social and political history of West Africa, rather than as forerunners of modern African literature."<sup>16</sup> The themes of these poets were remarkably similar to PNG's poets in their initial

stages of creative writing: conflict of cultures; examination of the past, and the struggles against colonialism.

Natachee's early works according to Beier were "patroned" by Australians, and were often broadcast over the Australian Broadcasting Corporation network. The early Natachee condemned his past ("none but worthless heathen rubbish"),<sup>16</sup> praised Britain, and his work was, to use Beier's words, "embarrassing in its naivete."<sup>17</sup> Beier depicts Natachee as a victim of culture contact, of colonialization, "...left helplessly hanging between two worlds and hopelessly admiring what he cannot understand."<sup>18</sup>

In contrast, Natachee's collection of powerfully translated and rendered Mekeo songs appeared in one of Beier's Papua Pocket Poet Series publications in 1968. This example deals with hopelessness and deprivation:

#### Poverty

Poverty, only poverty.  
From what poverty have I come  
to live in poverty?  
From what poverty have I come  
to stand in poverty?  
Poverty, only poverty.

From home of poverty I have come  
to live in poverty  
From home of poverty I have come  
to stand in poverty  
...

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Beier's criticism of Natachee's early poems seems didactic. Perhaps he wanted to imply that Natachee could reproduce in English translation the purity and strength of ancient Mekeo songs, yet when it came to writing his own poetry, Natachee suffered from deeply ingrained colonial mimicry and self-denigration. In 1969 Beier observed the beginnings of an indigenous written literature developing in Papua New Guinea. His criticism of Natachee was no doubt intended as a lesson to younger writers.<sup>20</sup>

Beier's article on Natachee served as an example to PNG's aspiring writers of what not to become. In 1968 the first book, an autobiography, by an indigenous Papua New Guinean appeared. Albert Maori Kiki, according to Beier in his preface to Kiki's publication, did not actually write Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime. It is in fact an oral history recorded on tape and transcribed after several weekly meetings with Kiki sometime in 1967 or early 1968.<sup>21</sup> The Papua Pocket Poet Series (PPPS) appeared in 1968, also initially edited by Beier. A year later Kovave began publication and the first writing contest, sponsored by Robert Boschman was announced.<sup>22</sup> Boschman later became an editor for Papua New Guinea Writing. By the end of 1970 there was something of a literary boom in PNG. The first novel by a Papua New Guinean, The Crocodile by Vincent Eri, was published in Australia by Jacaranda Press; the Papua Pocket Poet Series published 20 volumes from 1968 to 1970; Kovave published four issues of poetry, fiction, essays, drama, folklore and criticism; and Papua New Guinea Writing began an eight-year life, published by the Literature Bureau in 1970.

Significantly, the majority of the major poets being published in PNG were university students. In 1970, of the 20 volumes PPPS had published to date, two contained works by individual poets, one by Prithvindra Chakravarti, then a lecturer at UPNG along with Ulli Beier, entitled Sands Sun Water. Born in India in 1933, Chakravarti arrived in PNG in 1967, the same year as Beier. His influence upon Papua New Guinea writing has yet to be critically examined or acknowledged.<sup>23</sup>

The second volume was published by university student, Kumalau Tawali titled, Signs in the Sky. The first Papua New Guinean writer to publish a collection of poems, Tawali wrote plays and short stories as well. In 1970,



Prompt Theatre in Canberra had performed his drama, "Manki Masta."<sup>24</sup> Tawali's poetry collection was highly creative, well-wrought, and helped stimulate a growing commentary dealing with resentment and reactions to foreign domination and colonialism by Papua New Guinea poets:

The Bush Kanaka Speaks

The kiap shouts at us  
forcing the veins to stand out in his neck  
nearly forcing the excreta out of his bottom  
he says: you are ignorant

He says: you are ignorant,  
but can he shape a canoe,  
tie a mast, fix an outrigger?  
Can he steer a canoe through the night  
without losing his way?  
Does he know when a turtle comes ashore  
to lay its eggs?

...

Every white man the govment sends to us  
forces his veins out shouting  
nearly forces the excreta out of his bottom  
shouting you bush kanaka.

He says: you ol les man!  
Yet he sits on a soft chair and does nothing  
just shouts, eats, drinks, eats, drinks,  
like a woman with a child in her belly.  
These white men have no bones.  
If they tried to fight us without their musiket  
they'd surely cover their faces like women.<sup>25</sup>

Tawali's mixture of Tok Pisin and English anticipated a flood of inventive diction - creative experiment, outright devil-may-care utilization of language, a mixture of both vernacular and Pidgin and even broken English - by the poets who would publish later. "Bush Kanaka Speaks" is one of the first poetic expressions of anger and invective directed against the Australian presence in PNG. However, unlike the more direct and oftentimes blatant anti-colonial poetry that followed, a majority of Tawali's own poetry reveals his concerns over his country and its situation with a controlled sense of reserve:

## Niu

You are the baby that crawls  
too long.  
All the others are walking—  
what has your mother been doing with you?  
Have you been carried too long?  
Have you been fed too much?

...  
One day nobody will be around  
and you will have to carry weight  
if you can't—  
you will fall.  
...<sup>26</sup>

Niu translates as coconut. Tawali is not only speaking about the struggle of a young coconut shoot, but he is referring to nationhood, or Niugini, in Tok Pisin. In a 1970 interview with Tawali, Donald Maynard, founding editor for Papua New Guinea Writing asked Tawali specifically about "Niu" and Tawali replied, "The word "niu" means coconut in my language—In fact you are right when you say that it's an allegory for "New Guinea."<sup>27</sup> Though Tawali has been called "...the most lyrical, least explicitly political of the university poets.", his poetry, reflects both a genuine understanding of his private world and of the world of politics as well as his concern over the destiny of his land and country:<sup>28</sup>

## A Coconut is a Coconut

Disobedient child!  
Whose stomach did you come from?  
Whatever I ask you to do  
you refuse.  
When other boys go fishing  
you sit at home.  
When did you last hold the kua  
to beat sago?  
All you do is "Stay at home,"  
"Stay at home."  
Now that your stomach is empty,  
why don't you eat "Stay at home?"  
Oh! My head!  
Alas the proverb is true:  
"A coconut is always a coconut."  
A boy is always his father.<sup>29</sup>

In the early 1970's Tawali and poet John Kasaipwalova, who were both students at UPNG, often got into disputes regarding politics. Tawali was moderate whereas Kasaipwalova was an active proponent in the "black power" movement prevalent at UPNG in the late '60s and early 1970s. In 1970, in front of an audience of more than 200, mostly comprised of students and staff, Kasaipwalova presented his topic, "Why We Should Hate Whites." A Pacific Islands Monthly article summed up his presentation:

...Kasaipwalova fluently and rationally declared that whites in the territory should be hated in the sense that they should be rejected, and their dominating power structure with them, so the native people could stand up with pride as members of their own race.<sup>30</sup>

Tawali in his 1970 interview with Maynard, editor of Papua New Guinea Writing, responded to one of Maynard's questions, "Do you think the country needs constructive student politicians?"

Yes—there is really no need for us to have such things as "black power" and all this because I think internationally the world has enough troubles already. There are enough racial troubles in the world and the world has shrunk into a small community—there is no need for racial discrimination or racial identification. On the other hand some of our students only create racial disharmony by having such things as this. I would really go all the way with them if they proposed cultural reconstruction or something to do with the unity of the people—then I would go all the way with them—but I completely disagree with such things as the black power movement.<sup>31</sup>

This statement provoked an immediate response by John Kasaipwalova which was published in the subsequent issue of PNGW, titled "What is 'Cultural Reconstruction'???".

One could say that the beginnings of an anti-colonial drive from Niuginians is necessary as the conducive environment; for basically the confusion and non-identity of the black people in Niugini today could be painted within the framework of western colonialism.

Black Power does not seek to create racial disharmony, but harmony between races. This may seem a paradox to the politically naive. But before we can stand with dignity and equality with other human beings of different ethnic origins, we must strike at those that divide and prevent us from so doing.

...

The arts ought to be a mirror for self-examination, where the inconsistencies and situations of human oppression could be expressed. For this to be effective, they must communicate the message to the people with a view to enlightening and transforming our society. This does entail an awareness of past cultures as sources of inspiration, but certainly not an over-emphasis on their reconstruction—for that would be to shut our eyes to the present condition of our people."<sup>32</sup>

In May of 1970 at the Fourth Waigani Seminar, Michael Somare, then a Member of PNG's Second House of Assembly, presented a paper titled, "Political Organization in Niugini." The basic thrust of Somare's paper was to identify the problems of political organizing in Papua New Guinea which needed to be resolved before political power could be shifted from the controls of the colonial administration. The problem of establishing a Niuginian identity was complex. According to Somare Papua New Guinea suffered from a lack of national consciousness; a fragmentation of tribes which hampered national unification; a social and political structure that contained no chiefly system; and finally, no common language. Somare accused the European administration of attempting "to destroy anything organised by Niuginians." He concluded his paper by stating that "...unless there is a true feeling of nationalism and something in common for people to come together and fight for, then we cannot expect results."<sup>33</sup>

PNG student thinkers and poets were responding to each other both through their creative literature as well as their political statements. Many of the key politically active individuals were writers and vice versa.<sup>34</sup>

The Influence of John Kasaipwalova

Australian literary critic, John Beston, in his article, "Chill and Flame: The Poetry of John Kasaipwalova," identified the main theme of Kasaipwalova's poetry as "...the destructive effect of white colonialism on black self-respect in Papua New Guinea." Beston stated that Kasaipwalova's long poem, "Reluctant Flame," had a major impact when it first appeared almost simultaneously in 1971 in Nigeria and PNG. Kasaipwalova's poem was the "...first notable expression of national feeling in PNG."<sup>35</sup>

Kasaipwalova's long poem is a wild, almost uncontrolled work. Aimed at both white and black audiences, its tone is angry, sarcastic, caustic, descriptive and intolerant:

Cold bloodless masks stare me, not for my colour  
But for my empty wealth house and passion logic

...  
Look how orderly fat and silent they float this earth  
With their guns, their airplanes, their cyclone  
Wheels and their bishops

...  
"Masta masta give me more, I will pray, I will obey,  
yes masta truly!"<sup>36</sup>

The poem's 211 lines move through images of black obsequiousness and submission that oppress the narrator of the poem and his world. In the end, Kasaipwalova creates a powerful vision but not until he tears through his soul as if damned. Kasaipwalova addresses several audiences: Papua New Guineans, whites, the black-world, and himself. One of the key lines in the lines in the poem reveals both the exasperation and hope the poet feels, searching:

What is this chill, where is that Flame to warm and melt me?<sup>37</sup>

For poets like Albert Wendt, the chill is racism and all the endless implications of racism through colonial education, the humiliating aspects of

Christianity toward indigenous cultures, and the arrogance of a dominating culture superimposing itself upon another.<sup>38</sup> For Beston the chill "...is that of the 'cold seed' making its roots in the heart of the poet...as freezing body and soul,...a cold wind blowing from the West and its civilization...."<sup>39</sup> For Kasaipwalova, the chill is white oppression in all its manifestations. There is only one way out, through upheaval and violent uprisings:

Each day the weighty cover shrieks arrogantly  
Vowing to crush and smother the tiny flame within that  
pulse

...

I will call my ancestors and all the spirits of my  
grounds and waters

...

Inside each mountain lies a tiny flame cradled and  
weighted above  
People will live, people will die  
But the tiny flame will grow its arms and legs very  
slowly  
Until one day its volcanic pulse will tear the green  
mountain apart...<sup>40</sup>

In 1972 Goodwin, in an article titled "No Stagnant Neutrality," stated that Kasaipwalova's image of the flame was not a statement concerned with "...a nationalist belief in the value of being rooted in the soil of one's native land."<sup>41</sup> Rather, Kasaipwalova's image of the flame encompassed all blacks dominated by white segregation and oppression. "The flame is one of revolt against an alien culture, not one of pride in the soil....His flame is one with the flame of revolt by blacks everywhere against white domination."<sup>42</sup>

The tiny flame within its own fence is burning into  
the icy centres  
Look how the flame came from the ghettos

...

Maybe your vibrant lava will flow to burn  
anew the world  
When Johannesburg and New York is in flames

...

Our reluctant flame is burning disconnected like  
a bush fire  
But one day, one day...one day...<sup>43</sup>

Beston interpreted the flame as "...pictured as tiny but of great potential power."<sup>44</sup> What seems important in light of these commentaries is Kasaipwalova's feelings toward a people—the black race and those of his country:

I cannot in honest clarity show us the way out of  
 our grave  
 Inside, inside, where our eyes do not see there is a  
 Pulse!  
 ...there is a living  
 Memory!<sup>45</sup>

Whether this memory—the inside that the poet refers to—is rooted in the soil, concerns all racial inequity, is nationalistic or simply that between white and black is beside the point. Kasaipwalova was concerned with matters at hand. The poet articulates the unifying forces within his own country:

I go past the Palm Tavern  
 ...  
 People meeting, laughing at Koki  
 ...we say no words, we know  
 ...  
 Wantok we eat our rice and meat together...<sup>46</sup>

His last stanza, in uppercase bold letters, is both a plea and a command. From subservience, to despair and humiliation, to confidence and vision, both external, internal, cerebral and sensual, the poet shouts:

RELUCTANT FLAME OPEN YOUR VOLCANO  
 TAKE YOUR PULSE AND YOUR FUEL  
 BURN BURN BURN BURN BURN  
 LET YOUR FLAMES VIBRATE THEIR DRUMS  
 BURN BURN BURN BURN  
 BURN AWAY MY WEIGHTY ICE  
 BURN INTO MY HEART A DANCING FLAME<sup>47</sup>

"Reluctant Flame" inspired an intellectual debate within Papua New Guinea as well as abroad. The first printing sold out quickly and it evoked international reaction. Through it Papua New Guinea could be seen as one nation, a nation of blacks struggling for dignity and equality. These images

were read and heard by Papua New Guineans, including those who were already in power and who were, in part, responsible for directing their country toward greater autonomy from Australian administrative and bureaucratic controls:

The strongly anti-colonial sentiment it contained, and its call for revolution, jolted the complacency of many expatriates and Papua New Guineans who had already stepped into expatriates' shoes.

["Reluctant Flame"]...succeeded in thrusting before literate Papua New Guineans an awareness of their links with oppressed black brothers in other parts of the world and provided them with a fearless, uncompromising picture of their situation under Western exploitation.<sup>48</sup>

In 1972 Kasaipwalova published a collection of poetry, Hanuabada, through the Papua Pocket Poets Series. Thirteen stanzas long, the title poem never reached the same acclaim as "Reluctant Flame." Hanuabada, the name of an actual shanty town in Port Moresby, comments on cultural loss and addresses the cultural degradation of PNG both symbolically and in actuality.

The late Kristy Powell, of the University of Papua New Guinea, wrote of Kasaipwalova's Hanuabada as a "paradise lost." "Hanuabada," Powell interprets, has been glamorized and is part of Kasaipwalova's imagination: "...of all those Trobriand Islanders who returned home after a stint of digging drains in Moresby in the 50s it had been 'Hanuabada, my big and beautiful dream village,' but when he sees the real Hanuabada he can only cry: ...'O Hanuabada! What have they done to you?'"<sup>49</sup>

According to Goodwin, the poem describes "...the ugly, crowded Hanuabada section of Port Moresby."<sup>50</sup> Kasaipwalova clearly expressed his devastation over a place imagined, a place destroyed in the mind once perceived in reality. Hanuabada is a village, but of a different sort; it represents a place longed for. Once a tiny native settlement, perched on the shoreline, Hanuabada transformed as Port Moresby grew. Its relatively modern



construction was the imagined envy of many Papua New Guineans who were not familiar with its urbanized settings:

They told me you were civilized; your iron roofs,  
timber floors, electricity and all

...  
So clean, so educated, so rich, so civilized,  
so new and white...  
When the heavy rains broke our rotten grass roof  
And made me cold and wetted my sleeping mats  
When mud and pigshit smells nearly broke my nose  
When mosquitoes bit me and I hit myself for nothing

...  
One day I will make our grass roofed village like  
Hanuabada  
Iron roofs for grass, timber floors and all...<sup>51</sup>

The poet satirically longs for an ideal, modernized village to be built as his home, based on the idealized Hanuabada model. The narrator, coming from his "primitive village" admired the big houses with water tanks and heaters, neat green lawns, neatly manicured, "Yet somehow my eye felt a strange harshness everywhere...." He finds instead signs ("No Natives Allowed"), guard dogs, wire fences, lighted neon streets, tempting window fronts ("All of them opening their legs to tease my throat"). He visits the harbor and sees nothing but goods and more material wealth being imported into his country. Homes of the wealthy ("like nesting white pigeons") are nestled high above the black shanties. Black women sell their beads, pottery and baskets on the streets.

Hanuabada I mourn for you now—your waters is taken!  
You and I must crawl and beg in our own 'claimed' land.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, the poet admits that "Crying only brings me pains of emptiness" and "Death is more paralyzing than the wounds of honest pains":

I have ripped apart the house of my soul  
To drag before my mirror my naked self<sup>53</sup>

Kasaipwalova's commentary upon himself was a statement to all. The blind embrace and desire for the white man's material culture, the "empty wealth house" if you will, had in part created Hanuabada. He sought to depict these troubled images of colonization both for self-examination and as an exercise in seeking future actions, "To take the unknown jump across the dividing barbed fences." Again, as in "Reluctant Flame" the poet offered no specific solutions; rather, he provided a final image of Hanuabada turning into a flowing river: "Let your sorrows and pains/Run the streets like smashing thunder." He called for action. Something had to be done about the colonial situation and cruelty of oppression and double standards. "Civilized" towns were divided and the health of the house of the soul was critical.

#### A "SILENT" INDEPENDENCE?

From 1972 to 1973 Papua New Guinea headed for self-government, which was finally achieved on December 1, 1973. Independence would arrive two years later. The level of vehement anti-colonialism found in John Kasaipwalova's poetry would never again be reached in the poetry that followed, although similar themes did prevail. A flowering of literature, the arts, theater, and music continued. Aspiring poets of Papua New Guinea such as Jack Lahui, Kama Kerpi, Henginike Riyong and Apisai Enos were active.

In 1971 Enos, author of a collection of poems, High Water, was optimistic regarding nationhood for PNG:

New Guinea, beloved New Guinea  
What do they say about you?

...  
The land of thousand tribes and trails  
primeval forests of termites, leeches and cicadas  
hidden valleys and mountain crags of old  
deep gorges and rugged ranges

...  
land of haus tambaran, dukduk and eravo  
land of kovave masks and gope boards

...  
Don't you know that I am your husband  
betrothed to you in childhood  
promised to you in the womb?  
I have come to celebrate our wedding  
I have come to elope with you  
into better times.<sup>54</sup>

Although Enos, in a later essay, would express serious doubts concerning the viability of creative writing in Papua New Guinea, his call for national priorities remained consistent with his early poem, "Unity":

Old wrinkled womb  
    mother of  
Gamas  
    Markhams  
        Wabags  
            Arowes  
                Kaviengs  
                    and Chimbus  
you who brought forth  
    Manus  
        Sepiks and Tolais  
            Gogodalas  
Kiwais Keremas Dobuans Huris and Motus

...  
Though your blood is their blood  
    your flesh their flesh  
        your mind their mind  
they will not acknowledge their kin  
    and like delta islands they drift  
further apart in pools and streams of blood

Awake mother

...  
    keep them safe under your tapa cloth  
let them recognise each other at last  
    on your breasts.<sup>55</sup>

In 1972, Enos became the editor for Kovave (from 1972 to 1975), and wrote an introspective essay: "Niugini Literature, A View from the Editor."<sup>56</sup> The educational system, he maintained, was an alienating force, separating Papua New Guineans from their own cultural traditions. He saw creative writing as a "gambling game for intellectuals," in which an elite circle was participating. Oral literature was the popular literature which was both integral and functional. It was part of the entire life cycle of Papua New Guineans, present in the social, cultural and political fabric of the society. The present written literature up to 1972 was transitional, used as a political weapon in response to colonialism. It was a polemic exercise and expressed rebellion against alienation, shifting values and social conventions. Adding to this, Enos stated that as yet, "Niugini literature" was not an art form, but merely political literature. He also argued that it was unpopular because it was in English. Not enough time had passed, for the people had not yet developed an appreciation for written literature, not to mention the skill of reading itself. Literature in Pidgin, Motu and other vernaculars was lacking. (In 1974 Papua New Guinea had a national literacy of eleven percent in English and twelve percent in Pidgin.)<sup>57</sup>

Finally, Enos warned against the dangers of replacing the more elaborate and ritualist literature of the oral traditions and art with the present written literature, which he termed idealistic, artificial, and imitative of European traditions. Papua New Guinea's writers needed to create an "acceptable Niuginian English...a national type of English," just as the Americans and Australians had. This was necessary because of the sheer diversity of languages in PNG. Ultimately both the oral tradition as well as

the newer contemporary literature needed to come together to create what Enos felt was "national unity through literature."<sup>58</sup>

In contrast, John Waiko in the same issue of Kovave, called for a "cultural revolution," in which the "role of literature should be able to destroy the present basis of the educational system."<sup>59</sup> He predicted that the system of education in PNG would inevitably lead to a stage where "neo-colonialist" elites within a strongly defined class structure would be running the country. The educational system would cause the people to lose their cultural values. Finally, Waiko predicted a continued dependence on western or westernized powers. The elites had absorbed the colonial system to such an extent as to make the people and country economically dependent.

As a possible remedy, Waiko proposed the establishment of vernacular schools and the production of volumes of literature in the vernacular to encourage a national identity. The present literature, Waiko wrote, was negative, demonstrating a lack of understanding of traditions and traditional lifestyles. He proposed a new literature in the form of dance-drama and traditional story-telling which he envisioned would be produced by the people in the villages then used in public schools. If steps were not taken to find a common tradition in PNG, then "...the elite...will have no alternative except to continue the colonial pattern which does nothing except create a class society."<sup>60</sup>

Even before independence, many of Papua New Guinea's poets and dramatists such as Waiko were concerned with how to achieve national consciousness against countless odds. Stage one of the Brash/Soyinka theory, the period prior to independence which reflects a growing awareness and anger over foreign domination, and stage two, when pro-nationalism and anti-colonialism

dominates the literature, are not quite distinct from each other when applied to PNG. According to Brash, 1968 was a turning point when "a number of significant developments in creative writing and publishing" began to occur.<sup>61</sup> PNG's literature at the "turning point" reflects both growing anger and awareness, coupled with nationalistic themes. There are also examples of resistance to nationalism in the poetry written before independence as well. In fact, stage three - when disillusionment over national ills and resentment toward insufficient change within the newly-formed government - seems to arrive simultaneously with independence. Many of PNG's poets reveal disparate themes related to Independence Day "celebrations." For Papua New Guinea, stages one through three, occurred rapidly. One could say that for many Papuans, Bougainvilleans, Highlanders, and "micronationals" alike, the "union" of Papua New Guinea and its independence was "a crude marriage of convenience."<sup>62</sup> Many voices can be heard in Papua New Guinea's writers. And rarely does the writing indicate "unity." In Africa, the third stage of writing was the present dilemma. Soyinka observed the stage of disillusionment to contain an absence of vision on the writer's part as well.<sup>63</sup>

After Independence Day, Sept. 16, 1975, instead of a new wave of literature celebrating independence or a fresh burst of anti-colonial memories to remind readers of past struggles, poetic output declined. A Papua Pocket Poet publication called Siboda Henari (Independence), a small anthology consisting of seven PNG poets was an exception. Of the seven, only two, Henginike Riyong and Jacob Simet, were published veterans of the craft. Riyong published one poem, "Come Under My Wings" expressing irony and almost defying the circumstances of PNG's independence:

...  
 Men of tomorrow,  
 Men of future,  
 You are after pants that are not yours,  
 You are after meat that belongs to others.  
 Pigs are your possessions,  
 Shells are your wealth.  
 The ancestors of your fathers  
 The spirits of your ancestors  
 Are watching you.

...  
 Come and hide under my wings,

...  
 When you come back  
 Don't be surprised.  
 My sons and daughters,  
 We will all be under one ruler.  
 The bushes and the thorns  
 The green leaves, the soft grass  
 Will be with us.  
 O, men of tomorrow  
 O, the rebuilders of my villages  
 Come under my wings.<sup>64</sup>

Simet's poem is no less ironic. His poem "Independence" is not a feasting, dancing, time of celebration, rather:

It is the third crow:  
 The lark begins to cry,  
 The dogs are howling,  
 Heralding the spirits of darkness,  
 Returning to their niches,

...  
 ...prepare for the life,  
 Within independence,  
 Which is here,  
 And nothing can stop it.<sup>65</sup>

Papua New Guinea Writing also published a section called "Independence Special." A listing of the titles is sufficient enough to get the gist of the poetry within: "Peace," "A Dream of Independence," "The One Called Independence," "I Am the Boss," "Happy Independence," and "Siboda Henari." Two poems expressed confusion: "What Is It?" and "What Are You?"<sup>66</sup>

Nigel Krauth, perhaps the most knowledgeable and committed researcher and essayist regarding the contemporary literature of Papua New Guinea, though

rarely hesitating to be critical when necessary, identified the period between 1968-73 as the first phase of Papua New Guinea writing.<sup>64</sup> He called this a period of innocence. Keeping the Enos and Waiko articles in mind, however, it should be noted that this first phase represented a period of extremes during which the dialogue and the creativity of western-educated Papua New Guineans reached public forums as never before. This was also a period unique in the history of Papua New Guinea. The country was experiencing the effects of newly created educational institutions. In 1957, an auxiliary division of the Territory Public Service was formed by the Australian administration to train Papua New Guineans for the civil service.<sup>68</sup> The Administrative College was founded in 1964, the University of Papua New Guinea in 1966, and the Goroko Teacher's College in 1967. Beier describes the first four or five years of Papua New Guinean literature "as a literature of decolonisation."<sup>69</sup> Some of the newly educated writers had slipped easily into the shoes of the whites who were in power, but many others had rebelled.

Soyinka's first and second stages of evolution can be applied to this period, along with some overlapping into the third stage, disillusionment over national ills despite independence, as evidenced by Riyong and Simet's poems. The question of independence for PNG was certainly not a simple one and the variations in the poetic content of Papua New Guinea's poets reveal this.

Interestingly the period between 1974-5 has been described by Krauth and others as a "fallow" one, a period of literary "silence," where "inner activity, the developments beneath the surface," were not reflected in the writing of this time period.<sup>70</sup> Taban Lo Liyong, then chairman of the literature department at UPNG from 1975 to 1977, linked the suppression of development of the indigenous literature to the lack of publishing prospects



for PNG writers.<sup>71</sup> Krauth pointed to what he called a "publisher's silence." The possibility of the dissolution of copyright laws after the Australians left and the unsuccessful experiences of publishers in PNG previous to independence were held to be partly responsible. He also suggested that Papua New Guinean writers were simply sitting on their works, waiting for copyright laws to be enacted.

Perhaps another cause of this silent period was the departure of the more experienced and charismatic writers from the university throughout the early 1970s. Kamalau Tawali, involved with the Moral Rearmament movement, had left the country for a number of years. Leo Hannett, one of PNG's first dramatists left for Bougainville in 1973, and became deeply involved in the secessionist movement prior to independence. Kasaipwalova resigned as president of the Students Representative Council in 1972 and left for the Trobriands to organize the Kabisawali, a communal, self-help, Movement. John Waiko left Port Moresby to help organize the Binandere, and poet Bede Dus Mapun left to work with his people as well. Literary catalyst and original collaborator with many of PNG's early creative writers, Ulli Beier, had also been away for three years, directing the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ife, in Nigeria from 1971 to 1974.<sup>72</sup>

The cause of this exodus from Port Moresby is probably due to several factors. Unlike other third world countries approaching independence, censorship did not prevail in Papua New Guinea. In fact, "radical literature was positively encouraged."<sup>73</sup> The early writers who were for the most part university students, simply may have outgrown their environment. Many of them were no doubt concerned over the effects of nationhood in their own homelands. Still others possibly saw opportunities elsewhere, in the form of

politics, the civil service, and furthering their academic interests. At the zenith of this flowering of written literature, their works drew audiences both within and without PNG, readily attracting publishers. Most importantly, the periods between 1968 and 1975 were exciting and crucial years, with the final stages of political transition both a highly localized as well as a regional issue. As Kasaipwalova put it:

...it is most necessary for us to come to terms with the real interests of our own village people without generalising about the fairly diverse rural populations of Papua New Guinea.

It had been necessary to break with the work of theories and philosophies in the abstract and engage in the practicalities of the real world. The experience and the practical skills we are developing can never be taught to us from the sacred books of the university.<sup>74</sup>

#### "Dancing Yet to the Dim Dim's Beat"?

If the years between 1968 and 1973 produced all the excited energy of the birth of a literature, perhaps the recent silence is the stunned realisation that the infant is a bastard."<sup>75</sup>

In 1964 Papua New Guinea held its first national election. A year later, eight (some sources say thirteen) young public servants, a majority of whom were studying at the Administrative College in Port Moresby, formed a group called the Bully Beef Club.<sup>76</sup> Originally a social club, named after the bully beef consumed from tin cans, this group of men and one woman, began discussing politics. By April of 1966 the group had formed a "Committee of Ten." The committee addressed issues of wages; direct departmental administrative control by elected officials rather than by directives from the Australian government; the abolition of special electorates for Australians only; a simplification in the civil service structure, and citizenship for Papuans and

New Guineans in their own country.<sup>76</sup> By June of 1967 the Pangu Pati was formed which included Michael Somare, Albert Maori Kiki and Oala Oala-Rarua. Before the end of 1975 all three would be published authors as well as powerful elected officials of high caliber.<sup>77</sup>

In 1975, the year of Independence for PNG, both Papua Pocket Poet Series and Kovave ceased publication. Papua New Guinea Writing had become more of a mass audience vehicle catering to school children and government workers as well as the general public. Furthermore, its format did not allow for deeply critical writing and did not feature substantial works of any one writer.

A year later, the first Independent Papua New Guinea Writers' Conference was held from July 1 to 4. The organizers of the conference sought a wide exchange of ideas. Samoan poet and writer Albert Wendt, Maori poet Hone Tuwhare and writer Patricia Grace were invited along with Aboriginal poet Kath Walker, Ugandan writer Okot P'bitek, Kole Omotoso from Nigeria, Edwin Thumboo from the University of Singapore and Theo Luzuka from Ghana.<sup>78</sup>

On the first day of the conference an article by Lo Liyong appeared in the Papua New Guinea Post-Courier. At the time, Lo Liyong, Ugandan literary critic, poet, folklorist and fiction writer was director of the Literature Department at UPNG. According to Lo Liyong, a group calling itself "the Apostles" had formed at UPNG and allied itself with the Bully Beef Club in the late 1960s. The Apostles were students who, according to Liyong, were the "core of militancy in the University," awake in the fight for national independence and leading toward the integration of eating and drinking places.<sup>79</sup> All of the Apostles were published writers, and the "path for political independence of Papua New Guinea was charted." Recounting the history of the Bullybeef Club (the "bulls"), the founding of the Pangu Pati in

1967 and the relationship between a core group of militant students at UPNG (the Apostles), Lo Liyong drew a picture of a past relationship between writers and certain political leaders and vice versa:

Between the apostles and the bullybeefers, the path for political independence of Papua New Guinea was charted.

Between them, too, we now have the leading political leaders, civil servants, businessmen, and secessionists.

But, more to our point, all the apostles are published writers; most of the bullybeefers are published writers. It is therefore right to say the major literary activities of the sixties and early seventies were the creations of the bulls and the apostles.<sup>80</sup>

Lo Liyong added that the period of protest literature was over and that writers of PNG needed to do some self-criticism. He asked when the era of trial pieces would end and major work begin. Finally Lo Liyong emphasized that Papua New Guinean writers should form a writer's union in order to protect their copyrights and to encourage the growth of writing in PNG.

John Kasaipwalova responded to Lo Liyong's article. He called for a renewal of a common aim of both the original "bulls" and the "apostles." Though the writers had broken off with the university and had returned to their people, these "apostles" were now needed, said Kasaipwalova, to give the "bulls" some help in getting back on track—back to the original goals of the 1972 Eight Point Plan.<sup>81</sup> Kasaipwalova predicted a new literature, stating that it was up to former writers to "put aside some of our pride" and begin creating a literature reflecting "a vibrant developing society" committed to the Eight Point Plan.<sup>82</sup>

After the writers' conference, Jack Lahui, editor of Papua New Guinea Writing commented that a wide exchange of dialogue between the overseas writers and the writers from PNG had taken place. During the years following

the early 1970s, "a vacuum in our history" had been created because of an absence of dialogue and a lack of "decisiveness" by writers. He added:

I for one believe that the conference was well timed to coincide with this period of decolonisation where unless we are on the alert will our selves have created a 'literary suicide.'<sup>83</sup>

Ulli Beier in an article published a year earlier identified the specific areas which Papua New Guinean writers had yet to explore:

Papua New Guinean writers have not yet tried to write about the current political tensions: separatist movements, political pressure groups, friction between young radicals and conservatives, conflict between village aspirations and central government, the behind the scene pressures of big business on the national government, and the like.<sup>84</sup>

The literary situation continued to get worse. According to poet and novelist Russell Soaba in a January 1979 interview, the only outlet for writers in PNG was Papua New Guinea Writing which ceased operations at the end of 1978. Soaba also mentioned the New Nation, a glossy, superficial vehicle for literature interested mostly in writers who wrote in a Christian vein. The Institute for Papua New Guinea Studies, which came out with Soaba's first novel Wanpis in 1977, had no plans for publishing indigenous writers, nor did publishers like Kristen Pres or Robert Brown and Associates, based in PNG.<sup>85</sup>

In 1980 Bernard Minol, senior lecturer in literature at UPNG, published an article in the Times of Papua New Guinea called "The Death of PNG Writing." Minol's article was straight-forward: "The question that readers in PNG, the Pacific, and the world are asking is why has writing in Papua New Guinea come to a premature halt?"<sup>86</sup> He identified two veteran writers who were still active, Russell Soaba and Paulias Matane, author of no less than six novels at the time. New writers on the scene were also identified, including PNG naturalized citizen John Kolia, author of ten novels, Benjamin Umba and Nora

Vagi Brash. He failed to mention John Kasaipwalova who, following his own advice, had written a new form of literature for PNG audiences, a poem/drama called a kesawaga, or "Kiriwina ballet." The long dramatic poem, "Sail the Midnight Sun," had been described as a "balance of opposites," focusing on "the male and the female...night and day, the sacred and the profane, society and the individual."<sup>87</sup> Marriage, death, magic, trade cycles had all been addressed in this work based on Papua New Guinean life, stated the reviewer. The work had appeared consecutively for four weeks in the weekly section of the Papua New Guinea Post-Courier.

Minol identified two major constraints which were inhibiting the output of PNG writers: scarcity of willing publishers and the lack of an interested reading public. The scant literary output of writers reflected the post-independence situation in PNG since "...universities in this country have become 'manpower training institutions....'" In other words the liberal arts had been discouraged at the university level in favor of career-oriented course work.<sup>88</sup>

Ulli Beier in his preface to his 1980 compilation, The Voices of Independence, New Black Writing from Papua New Guinea echoed Minol's concerns:

The writers' position has become more difficult and more ambiguous since independence. In the late sixties the young angry writers were seen as natural allies by Papua New Guinea's politicians. The writers then helped to form public opinion and political consciousness and exercised some influence on the stance of leading politicians. But now the government is sensitive to criticism, and many politicians fail to distinguish between issues and personalities. Writers on the whole have been tolerated rather than encouraged. There are few intellectuals in parliament, and the leaders of the nation are pragmatic men not given to ideologies.<sup>89</sup>

In 1980 Kumalau Tawali, veteran poet and one time director of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies (IPNGS) attended a 3-day Unesco seminar in Sydney on book development in the western Pacific. He identified at least four problems contributing to the lack of creativity by PNG writers; the former writers were too busy as executives or administrators; no publishing company existed in the country whom the writers could trust or rely upon; there existed very little continuous contact with outside writers for encouragement and inspiration; and finally, there was no funding from either the government or other sources which could help the writers from Papua New Guinea.<sup>90</sup>

Two significant publications were introduced in 1980. A new literary magazine, Ondobondo (a Binandere word for festival or singing), originally edited by Alan Chatterton and Ganga Powell had a formidable editorial board and advisory committee including Minol, Soaba, Chakravarti, dramatist Arthur Jawodimbari, and Kasaipwalova. Ondonbondo was originally issued as a "forum for young writers," and has appeared annually to date, published by the Literature Department at UPNG. Several experienced poets, Russell Soaba, Jack Lahui, and Kaumalau Tawali are represented in this publication as well as playwrights and short story writers.

In 1980, The Times of Papua New Guinea announced the publication of another magazine, Bikmaus, a "journal of Papua New Guinean affairs, ideas and the arts."<sup>91</sup> Bikmaus published quarterly by the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, has not yet shown much leadership in creating a significant forum for Papua New Guinean poets. It has, however, produced some literary criticism focused on the contemporary creative literature of Papua New Guinea. Poet Vincent Warakai, a 1978 graduate from UPNG, contributed a poem that sets an

essential mood. Like PNG's political "watchdog" poets of the late 1960's and early 1970's, Warakai has commented upon, and documented a part of his era, as well as crafted his poetry to convey his particular thoughts with artistic integrity. The controversies of Independence in Papua New Guinea are far from resolved:

Dancing Yet to the Dim Dim's Beat

We are dancing  
 Yes, but without leaping  
 For the fetters of dominance  
   still persist  
Yes, still insist  
On dominating  
 Holding us down

We have been dancing  
Yes, but not for our own tune  
For we are not immune  
Yes, for our truly, our own truly  
Music of life is eroding  
Yes, the mystic tune holds  
Us spellbound  
 Our independence is abused

...  
 We have been dancing  
Yes, but the euphoria has died  
It is now the dull drumming  
Yes, of the flat drums  
Thud dada thud da thud dada thud  
Yes, It is signalling not the bliss  
 But the impending crisis.<sup>92</sup>

No Endings

As of 1983 the educational system in Papua New Guinea had not yet introduced literature as a subject in its primary or secondary educational curriculum. William McGaw in a 1983 article for Bikmaus titled "The Role of Literature in a Newly Independent Country," called this a tragedy for PNG's writers and students:



"To deprive a child of literature is to starve his imagination. To deprive him of his own nation's literature is to deny him his cultural self."<sup>93</sup>

In 1984, Ganga Powell published an introspective look at the past and present problems facing writers in PNG in an article titled "Looking Thru Those Eyeholes: The Dilemma of the PNG Writer in the 80s."<sup>94</sup> She cited four major problems: a formal education (including the study of English), in many cases, alienates the educated from the non-educated; PNG writers do not yet have a "strong critical tradition based on western poetics and aesthetics," resulting in an unawareness of both vernacular and the imported traditions; traditional oral creativity has never been a continuum developed in Papua New Guinean writers; and finally, a philosophical base has not been created. This philosophical base has not been created. This philosophical base is necessary in order to reassess deficiencies in languages, deficiencies of a critical climate for writers, and the necessity of researching the past.<sup>94</sup>

With the possible introduction of the Niugini Television Network by 1986-87, the writers of Papua New Guinea face an evergrowing challenge.<sup>95</sup> Contemporary written creative literature by indigenous Papua New Guineans is less than 20 years old excepting Natachee, who at age 62 was recently a poet-in-residence at the University of Papua New Guinea.<sup>96</sup> In September of 1983, the Papua New Guinea Writers' Union was organized. Regis Stella, principle architect of the group, felt that a Union was needed in order to support established writers and encourage younger writers in helping them to gain access to publishers in PNG and abroad. The Union was also concerned about the absence of copyright laws.<sup>97</sup>

With Ondobondo and Bikmaus presently available to PNG writers, and with establishment of Owl Books (published by UPNG, Prithvindra Chakravarti, series editor) now diversifying into various disciplines (Owl Poetry Paperbacks, Owl Drama Paperbacks, and Owl Bibliography Paperbacks) the future looks promising. Russell Soaba is perhaps an excellent example of a writer who will most likely persevere:

"The story now is that a few of us are soul-searching types of creative artists. This should compel us to go on writing and writing. Those of us who lived through pre-independence period have this experience of establishing a community, have the experience of seeing something done—we want our independence, we told ourselves: OK let's have it—we did have it—after which we became satisfied all of a sudden but there were quite a number of us left who were much more serious than what we were. Literature may have died down in Papua New Guinea but there are quite a number of writers who feel the urge to express ourselves.<sup>98</sup>

Soyinka's observations concerning the development of creative literature in post-colonial Africa can be applied very loosely when examining PNG's contemporary poetry. Papua New Guinea poets have articulated Soyinka's three stages in varying degrees of intensity: the anti-colonial, the pro-nationalistic, and the expressed disillusionment and even cynicism after the arrival of independence. The next stage, which has yet to be realized in Africa, according to Soyinka, is also true of PNG. Brash's interpretation of Soyinka is a bit simplistic: "a state of increased political maturity and national stability when the re-examination of national priorities can take place in an atmosphere that is relatively free of anti-colonial paranoia or blind patriotic fervor."<sup>99</sup> Soyinka's concern for writers in African states was more philosophical. Writers needed to rise above the mere chronicling of events. Soyinka felt that African writers had not yet begun to write with great vision, that is, not only record the "mores and experience of his

society" but expose the future "in a clear and truthful exposition of the present."<sup>100</sup> In other words, the writer had to understand his own importance as a writer, and thus begin to anticipate his society, providing understanding of future directions in terms of the present, rather gloomy, situation.

It must be noted that attempting to fit a literature into any evolution theory is academic at best. In this case the Brash/Soyinka "theory" helps gives structure and understanding to Papua New Guinea's creative literature and its politics. It is possible that if the younger as well as the more experienced writers continue a dialogue publicly with their country's political leaders and legislators, and vice versa, a national stability and consciousness may well develop, and the creative writing may one day reflect this. On the surface, educational needs and especially resolving language problems may be a few of the keys that can provide a dynamic environment for Papua New Guinea's creative writers. On the other hand, provincial, district, village, and regional forms of expression and themes will most likely perservere. Soyinka saw both George Orwell and Arthur Miller writing the "beginnings of something terrible" happening in their societies. Whether or not PNG writing "evolves" in the direction Soyinka indicates as a necessary development remains to be seen. Whatever the case, poets like Russell Soaba will continue their tradition, combining both the ancient and the modern. Politics and literature in Papua New Guinea will no doubt continue to be integral. Subramani, in his recently published South Pacific Literature, perhaps says it best, with more help from George Orwell:

To some extent literature cannot divorce itself from politics. George Orwell is by and large correct maintaining that "There is no such thing as genuinely non-political literature, at least of all in an age like our own, when fears, hatreds, and loyalties of a directly political kind are near to the surface of everyone's consciousness." The statement has particular relevance for South Pacific literature. There is an inherited political element in it because it has emerged as part of a counter-ideology to colonialism.<sup>101</sup>

FOOTNOTES

1. Bebe Dus Mapun, Kovave, Vol. 3, No. 1, Nov. 1971, 25.
2. Elton Brash, "Creative Writing, Literature and Self-Expression in Papua New Guinea," Australian Literary Studies, Vol. 6, No. 2, Oct. 1973, 170.
3. Wole Soyinka, "The Writer in an African State," Transition, Vol. 6, No. 31, June/July 1967, 13.
4. Brash, op. cit. 171.
5. Soyinka, op. cit. 12.
6. Soyinka, op. cit. 12.
7. Soyinka responded to his paper, "The Writer in a Modern African State," in a discussion panel. Both essay and discussion panel appeared in The Writer in Modern Africa, (New York, 1969), 14-21, 58; this article is a slightly revised version of the earlier Transition essay.
8. This paper was originally written for Professor Brij Lal, for his course, "Pacific Seminar: Melanesia," History 675. It was reworked the following semester in his "Pacific Research Seminar", History 676. The author would like to thank and acknowledge Roberta Sprague for her invaluable and extensive editorial comments, as well as suggestions from Paul D'Arcy, David Richardson, and Chantal Ferarro. Portions of this paper have also been extracted from papers written for Terence Wesley-Smith and Richard Herr.
9. Non-indigenous writers, especially Australians, have written fiction and verse with New Guinea settings since the early 1870s. See Nigel Krauth's New Guinea Images in Australian Literature, (Queensland, 1982), for an in depth anthology of creative writing on Papua New Guinea by Australian writers.
10. Subramani has identified six regions of contemporary literature in the Pacific Islands. See Subramani's recent publication, South Pacific Literature, from Myth to Fabulation, (Suva, 1985), for an indepth study of the literature of eleven English-speaking Commonwealth countries served by the University of the South Pacific.
11. Ulli Beier, "'Cautiously Advance Atomic Age': A Papuan Pilot Poet," Kovave, pilot issue, 1969, 40-44.
12. A.P. Allan Natachee, interview, "Natachee Distinguished Poet of Papua New Guinea," Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 7, Sept. 1972, 12-13; and from an article by Olaf Ruhen, "The Artistic Ones May Save the Future for Papua New Guinea," Pacific Islands Monthly, Vol. 44, No. 9, Sept. 1973, 71-73.
13. Natachee, op. cit. 12.

14. Natachee in Oceania, Vol. 22, No. 2, Dec. 1951, 148-161.
15. Beier, op. cit. 40.
16. Beier, op. cit. 40.
17. Natachee op cit. Oceania, 150.
18. Beier, op. cit. 40.
19. Beier, op. cit. 43.
20. Subramani acknowledged Ulli Beier's contributions to the contemporary literature of Papua New Guinea as "spectacular." Beier arrived in Papua New Guinea in 1967 from Ibadan, Nigeria. Since 1950, Beier had worked first as a tutor then as associate professor at the University of Ibadan where he founded the 'Mbari' Writers and Artists Club. Beier was also the director of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ife, Nigeria, from 1971 to 1974 and director of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies from 1974 to 1978. Responsible for founding two important cultural and literary journals in Nigeria, Odu and Black Orpheus, Beier also helped establish Kovave, the first literary journal of Papua New Guinea, and Giribori, a journal of Papua New Guinea cultures. Subramani stated: "The main catalyst here (PNG) was Ulli Beier whose experience in Africa, and his position at the University of Papua New Guinea, plus his exceptional talents as a teacher and editor, enabled him to spearhead a surge of literary expression at the University. His influence went beyond literature to a range of other forms of creativity from painting to music, dance, screen printing, and choreography." Subramani, South Pacific Literature, (Suva, 1985), x.
21. Ulli Beier, preface to Albert Maori Kiki, Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime, (Melbourne, 1982).
22. No author of article cited, "Writing Contest Has More Prizes Ready," PNG Courier, 19 April 1973, 29.
23. Prithvindra Chakravarti, Sun Sand Water, Papua Pocket Poets Series, Vol. 18, (Port Moresby, 1970). In 1986 Chakravarti was arrested for allegedly absconding from Papua New Guinea with cartons filled with PNG manuscripts. He was accused of illegally taking them out of the country.
24. Ulli Beier, editor, Five New Guinea Plays, (Queensland, 1971), ix.
25. Kumalau Tawali, Signs in the Sky, Papua Pocket Poets Series, No. 19, (Port Moresby, 1970), n.p.
26. Tawali, op. cit. n.p.
27. Donald Maynard, "An Interview with Kumalau Tawali," Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 2, Dec. 1970, 13.
28. Don Woolford, "New Guinea's New Writers Wave the Banner of Nationalism," Pacific Islands Monthly, Vol. 41, No. 12, Dec. 1971, 49.

29. Tawali, op. cit. n.p.
30. No author cited, "Saying What You Think on NG," Pacific Islands Monthly, Vol. 41, No. 7, July 1970, 45.
31. Tawali in Maynard, op. cit. 13.
32. John Kasaipwalova, "What Is 'Cultural Reconstruction'???" Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 3, Mar. 1971, 16.
33. Michael Somare, "Political Organisation in Niugini," Overland, No. 47, Autumn, 1971, 30-31.
34. Nigel Krauth, "Politics and Identity in Papua New Guinean Literature," Mana, Vol. 2, No. 2, May 1978, 45-58.
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57. Kristy Powell, "Some Perspectives on Papua New Guinea Writing," Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 16, Dec. 1974, 13-24.
58. Enos, op. cit. 48.
59. John Waiko, "The Place of Literature in PNG Education," Kovave, Vol. 4, No. 1, Nov. 1972, 43.
60. Waiko, op. cit. 45.
61. Brash, op. cit. 168.
62. James Griffin, et al. Papua New Guinea: A Political History (Victoria, 1979), 209.
63. An interesting contrast between African and PNG students has been noted by Griffin: "Students were apparently not as detached from their roots as some of the early critics of the founding of a university of PNG feared they would be. The decision not to have tertiary students trained abroad had the consequence of much less alienation than had occurred in Africa." Griffin, op. cit. 202.
64. Henginike Riyong in Siboda Henari, edited by Prithvindra Chakravarti, Papua Pocket Poets Series, (Port Moresby, 1975), n.p.
65. Jacob Simet in Siboda Henari, op. cit. n.p.
66. Jack Lahui, editor, Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 19, Sept. 1975, 14-15.
67. Nigel Krauth, "'Unfolding Like Petals': The Developing Definition of the Writer's Role in Modern Papua New Guinean Literature," ACLAS Bulletin, 5th series, No. 1, July 1978, 6.
68. Oala Oala-Rarua, "Race Relations," Papua New Guinea: Prospero's Other Island, (Sydney, 1971), 136-141.
69. Ulli Beier, "The Cultural Dilemma of Papua New Guinea," Meanjin Quarterly, Vol. 34, No. 3, Sept. 1975, 307.
70. Krauth, op. cit. 7.
71. Taban Lo Liyong, "Let's Be a Little Less Serious," Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 1 July 1976, 5.



72. Jack Lahui, editorial, Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 23, Sept. 1976, 2; Griffin, op. cit. 202-4; Powell, op. cit. 24.
73. Krauth, op. cit. 1.
74. John Kasaipwalova, "For Bulls and Apostles...A Common Aim," Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 9 July 1976, 4.1980, 14.
75. Nigel Krauth, ACLAS Bulletin, 1978, op. cit. 4.
76. Albert Maori Kiki, Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime, (Melbourne, 1982); Michael Somare, Sana, (Port Moresby, 1975); Don Woolford, op. cit. 49 and 111.
77. Beier in preface to Kiki, op. cit.; Taban Lo Liyong, "First Independent Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 1 July 1976, 5.
78. No author cited, Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 24 June 1976, 9; Jack Lahui, editorial, Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 23, Sept. 1976, 2.
79. Lo Liyong, op. cit. 5.
80. Lo Liyong, op. cit. 5.
81. John Kasaipwalova, Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, op. cit. 4.
82. The Eight Point Plan, a formulation of national goals, was promulgated in December of 1972. Described by Griffin as "somewhat ambiguous, even inconsistent, program...[it] was to become as much a catch-phrase for critics as a signpost for policy-makers. Succinctly, the eight aims were localisation, equal distribution of incomes and services, decentralisation, small-scale industry, self-reliance in production, self-reliance in the raising of revenue, equality for women and government control of the economy where necessary." See Griffin, et al, Papua New Guinea: A Political History, (Victoria, 1979), 188-9, 196.
83. Jack Lahui, op. cit. 2.
84. Ulli Beier, Meanjin Quarterly, op. cit. 308.
85. Russell Soaba, interviewed by Chris Tiffin, Span, No. 8, 1979, 15-30.
86. Bernard Minol, "The Death of PNG Writing," Times of PNG, 26, Sept. 1980, 21.
87. In a review of John Kasaipwalova's "Sail the Midnight Sun," Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, Weekend Magazine section, 5 April 1980, 4.
88. Minol, op. cit. 21.
89. Ulli Beier, Voices of Independence, New Black Writing from Papua New Guinea, (Queensland, 1980), xv-xvi.

90. Kumalau Tawali, "Why PNG Writers Have Stopped Writing," Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 28 March 1980, 22-27.
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92. Vincent Warakai, in Ondobondo, No. 4, 1984, cover.
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97. Kevin A'Arcy, "The Birth Pains of a Writer's Union," Ondobondo, No. 5, 1984, 30.
98. Soaba, op. cit. 1979, 18.
99. Brash, op. cit. 171.
100. Soyinka, 1969, op. cit. 58.
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